# Screen Shot 2016-02-11 at 8.49.10 PM.pngPerspective Taking: Writing the Position Paper

Once students have researched their country and their country and the topic, they put their information together into a formal position paper. Position papers are due at most traditional model UN conferences and teachers use them as in-class assignments as well. The outline for a position paper is shown below:

**Delegate(s):**

**School:**

**Country:**

**Committee:**

**Topic:**

**I. General Information**

1st Paragraph – Opening Statement (3 – 4 sentences) Why is this topic important for the committee to address? Why does your country care about this topic? What is your country‘s policy on this topic?

**II. Specifics**

2nd Paragraph – National Actions (3 – 5 sentences) Is the topic an issue in your country? What actions has your country taken to improve or address the issue on a national level?

3rd Paragraph – International Actions (3 – 5 sentences) How has your country improved or addressed the issues on an international level? What actions has your country taken on the issues on an international level? What conventions, treaties and resolutions has your country supported on this issue? What organizations is your country a member of that addresses this issue? Can you reference government officials on this issue?

4th Paragraph – Recommendations for Action (4 – 6 sentences) What role would your country like to see the international community take to address the problem? What are your country‘s recommendations to the committee on how to best resolve the issue?

# Perspective Taking: Sample Paper

The following is a sample position paper from an 8th grade student at the Sage School:

The Sage School

Myanmar

SOCHUM

**I. General**

Racism is the “hatred or intolerance of another race or races.” It affects both people and their nations. Nations are permanently restrained by racist policy, and so we must work together to end racism. These efforts can only be successful through worldwide collaboration. Racism has caused tragedies such as world wars, xenophobia, intolerance, and genocide. The international community cannot allow such atrocities that are fueled by its flames to continue. Myanmar will continue to be an active participant in these efforts. In Myanmar, there are over one hundred major ethnic nationalities, so ending prejudice and committing to racial equality is a priority.  This diversity is our crowning glory and one of the main draws of tourism revenue. Thus, maintaining this diversity is a priority as we move to democracy. Myanmar has a desire to eliminate racism completely, and we urge the international community to participate in this effort.

**II. Specific**

Myanmar prioritizes the deconstruction of racism in our governmental policy, but it is difficult to reform pre-existing racist policies and structures. This is because the international community has persistently waged a negative media campaign against us, making it impossible to get any assistance or to make any progress in the right direction. Much of this behavior is due to our “negative” treatment of illegal Bengali immigrants who take up one third of the population of Rakhine State. Any regulatory action that has taken place, such as the two-child per family limit so that each child can have adequate food, is solely for their benefit. We have had difficulty in making the pressure we face clear to the international community. Despite these setbacks, we have made significant progress such as jailing the Islamophobic monk Wirathu in 2003 and sentencing him to twenty-five years imprisonment. We hope that the international community sees this progress and will give us aid in helping existing progress to continue.

Myanmar has done its best to take as much of an active role in the international community’s efforts against racism as it has within its own borders. However, we can suffer from feelings of isolation from the international community due to economic sanctions. Though some have been lifted, it remains difficult to re-engage with the international community fully while our economy and our steps to democracy are affected by unfair sanctions. However, we do work with the international community in other ways and we hope to continue to do so. While Myanmar is one of the several countries who has not ratified the International Convention on All Forms of Racial Discrimination, it is in constant communication with the United Nations agencies in human rights work against racism and we regularly submit reports to the United Nations. We wish to continue our cooperation with the UN so that we may improve our anti-racism efforts at home and abroad. We also attended the World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa. Myanmar hopes that this displays our commitment to the elimination of racism in the global community.

Myanmar would like to receive assistance from the international community as it attempts to combat racism instead of suffering from the press demonizing us. One step we strongly support is other countries taking in refugees. An example of this would be assisting our problematic Bengali immigrant population by transporting them to another nation. We have a large population of these immigrants in the Rakhine state area, and resources are scarce. Tensions between Bengali immigrants, wrongly referred to as “Rohingya Muslims” by the international community, and Buddhist citizens of Myanmar are high. Without assistance from the international community, we will be unable to care for them. Myanmar also suggests that educational programs about the history of racism and its current forms be provided by countries who can afford to give aid. The United Nations’ Slave Route program also serves as a good example of possible efforts to undertake. The use of new technologies and educational systems in order to interest and educate the youth in the elimination of racism is an important pathway to abolishing racism in popular culture. Social media has already been organized in a grassroots fashion to vent frustrations and raise awareness, and this is a viable tool for the international community to use to eliminate racism in popular culture. Governments must be supported by the international community and the United Nations in order to fight discrimination by officials and private citizens.

**Position Paper Peer Editing**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 4= excellent, 3=good, 2=needs work, 1=below expectations, N/A = not relevant | Self Grade | Peer Grade |
| First Paragraph | Clear statement of why topic is important for the committee to address |  |  |
|  | Clear indication of why country cares about this topic |  |  |
|  | Clear description of the country’s policy on this topic |  |  |
| Second Paragraph | Clear description of national actions your country has taken to address this topic |  |  |
|  | Quotes from country’s official |  |  |
|  | Use of evidence (statistics and facts) from research |  |  |
| Third paragraph | Clear description of how your country has addressed this issue on an international level |  |  |
|  | International treaties and conventions mentioned |  |  |
|  | International NGO’s mentioned |  |  |
|  | Use of evidence (statistics and facts) from research |  |  |
|  | Quotes from international officials |  |  |
| Fourth Paragraph | Indicates actions the international community should take to address the problem |  |  |
|  | Indicates actions the committee should take |  |  |

Throughout the paper:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Research | Extensive research and evidence was incorporated throughout the research paper. |  |  |
| Voice | The position paper is written from country’s perspective, uses a diplomatic tone |  |  |
| Mechanics | Good grammar and punctuation |  |  |
| Style | Varied sentence structures, rich word choice |  |  |

# Perspective Taking: Grading the Position Paper

One way to evaluate students’ work in developing a country perspective is by grading their position papers. UNAGB teaching Laura Russell developed the rubric to use with her students:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sophisticated (10 points)** | **Straightforward (7 points)** | **Beginner (4-6 points)** |
| **Opening Statement** | Clearly explains the importance of the issue  Accurately and clearly explains one reason for your country’s concern about the issue; includes a statistic  Accurately and clearly gives one specific example of the country’s policy about the issue; include a statistic | Identifies the issue with mostly clear language  Explains one reason for your country’s concern about the issue with mostly clear language  Policy is explained with mostly clear language | Identifies the issue with mostly vague language  The country’s concern is explained with mostly vague language  Policy is mentioned but in vague terms |
| **National Actions** | Accurately and clearly explains how the issue has been addressed within your country  Provides specific examples and/or statistics that are highly relevant | Explains how the issue has been addressed within your country with mostly clear language  Examples and/or statistics are somewhat relevant | Explains how the issue has been addressed within your country with vague or inaccurate language  Examples and/or statistics are not relevant |
| **International Actions** | Your country’s international action(s) are clearly explained  The treaty/resolution you referred to is highly relevant to the issue  Quotes enhance the point you want to make | Your country’s international action(s) are explained with mostly clear language  The treaty/resolution you referred to is somewhat relevant to the issue  Quotes are somewhat relevant | Your country’s international actions(s) are explained with vague or inaccurate language  The treaty/resolution you referred to is not relevant to the issue  Quotes do not support the point you are trying to make |
| **Recommen-**  **dations** | Recommendation is logical and reasonable for your country’s position on the issue  Shows creativity based on your knowledge of your country and the topic | Recommendation is a good idea but not clearly logical or reasonable given your country’s position on the issue | Recommendation is not clearly logical or reasonable given your country’s position on the issue |
| **Works Cited** | Works Cited is complete and accurate | Works Cited is complete but not completely accurate | Works Cited is missing |
| ***Citations*** | Citations are noted after statistics, quotes, and any ideas not your own | Citations are present but do not show understanding of their purpose | Citations are missing |
| **Grammar Spelling** | Almost no errors | A few errors | A distracting number of errors |